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APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF
CUBA

IPF:(1992-96) $11 038 000
(CUB/92/G31) - Protecting Biodiversity and Establishing Sustainable Development of the Sabana-Camaguey Ecosystem

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	7 July 1993
Expected duration:	Two years
Proposed executing agency:	Government
Government implementing agency:	Cuban Academy of Sciences
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$1 997 400 Source of funds: GEF
Total UNDP budget:	$1 997 400

Project background

Cuba has the highest documented levels of biodiversity in the West Indies - one of the world's richest biological zones - and ranks unusually high compared to nearby continental countries with 25 times more known species of vertebrates and vascular plants per hectare than the United States or Canada. These levels will increase greatly as the remaining forty percent of the Cuban biota is discovered and catalogued. As a region within Cuba, the Sabana-Camaguey Ecosystem (SCE) is exceptional with an area of high species richness and endemism. The SCE comprises 75,000 square kilometres of land and sea, including 2500 islands and cays, the entire adjacent mainland watershed, and the ocean zone to the international maritime boundary in the Bahamas Strait.

In recognition of its high biodiversity and productivity, the Sabana - Camaguey Ecosystem has been designated a high priority area for conservation by the Academy of Sciences of Cuba (ACC) and the National Commission for the Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources (COMARNA). At the same time, however, increasing pressures for rapid economic development, especially with the potential to generate foreign currency, are accelerating resource extraction and tourism planning and development in the SCE. The sustainable utilization and management of the SCE's biodiversity should provide the basis for both its long-term protection and a process of economic development consistent with national aspirations and comparative advantages.

Description of project

The long-term objectives of the project are to: (a) protect the high levels of biodiversity in the Sabana-Camaguey Ecosystem in the context of expanding tourism and other resource development; and (b) develop a locally-adapted model of tourism that is sensitive to the ecological resources of the region while providing substantial economic benefits, biodiversity protection advantages, and improved tourism opportunities.

1/ This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

The immediate objectives of the project are to: (a) strengthen the scientific and environmental planning and management capabilities of Cuban agencies at the national, regional and local levels; (b) develop the biodiversity knowledge base to improve planning, management, and sustainable development of the area; (c) strengthen the technical infrastructure of key institutions to carry out research and monitoring of coastal and marine ecosystems; (d) develop a strategic plan and planning process for the Sabana-Camaguey Ecosystem fully integrating tourism and other economic activities with biodiversity protection to achieve sustainable development; and (e) raise public understanding and awareness of the biodiversity of the Sabana-Camaguey Ecosystem and its significance for local and national development.

Inputs

UNDP will provide international consultants in strategic environmental planning (two man-months), terrestrial and marine protected area planning (three man-months); tourism/ecotourism and resort master planning (three man-months); strategic tourism finance and marketing (two man-months) biodiversity information management system using GIS and National Biodiversity databases (four man-months); scientific equipment specialists (two man-months) and biodiversity research and information management system specialist (four man-months); fellowships, study tours and workshops in environmental management, biodiversity protection, and tourism planning; and scientific, operational and computer equipment.

Financial data

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Personnel	537 600
Subcontract	87 200
Training	150 000
Equipment	1 162 800
Miscellaneous	59 800
Total	1 997 400

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